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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE.

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FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION CAN HELP LOCAL AND STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SOLVE SOME OF THE NATION'S BASIC SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. ONE GOAL OF NEW FEDERAL PROGRAMS, LIKE THOSE FUNDED UNDER THE HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES ACT, IS TO HELP EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IMPROVE AND EXPAND THEIR TRADITIONAL SERVICES. A SECOND GOAL IS TO ENCOURAGE SCHOOLS TO ATTACK THE PROBLEMS OF POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT, AND ILLITERACY. FOR EXAMPLE, PROGRAMS FUNDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT (ESEA) ASSIST ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN REACHING IMPOVERISHED STUDENTS WHOM THEY HAVE FAILED IN THE PAST. SIGNIFICANTLY, UNDER TITLE V OF ESEA, THE GOVERNMENT HAS SUPPORTED PROGRAMS TO STRENGTHEN THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO STATE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION. WITH THE RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS, STATES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAMS, AND EACH LOCALITY HAS BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE HOW BEST TO MEET PARTICULAR CHALLENGES. IN ORDER TO PROVIDE MORE ASSISTANCE TO AREAS IN NEED, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MIGHT INITIATE AN EQUALIZATION PROGRAM. THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE TO OFFER THE STATES A FORM OF GENERAL ASSISTANCE THAT IS WISELY DISTRIBUTED AND AVOIDS COMPLICATIONS OF CONTROL. SUCH A PROGRAM OF GENERAL SUPPORT, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT REPLACE NATIONAL PROGRAMS OR LIMIT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY TO GUIDE EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS ESSENTIAL TO THE NATIONAL WELFARE. THIS SPEECH WAS PRESENTED BEFORE THE GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION, ORLANDO, FLORIDA, MARCH 1, 1967. (LB)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?*

An Address by Harold Howe II
U.S. Commissioner of Education
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You all remember the old story of the motorist who got lost far from home in a rural countryside. He stopped to ask for directions from a local farmer, and after much confusing conversation was told, "You just can't get there from here."

Despite the long and honorable history of Federal aid to education, that sentiment used to be heard quite frequently whenever discussions turned to whether there was an appropriate route by which the Federal government could help the schools.

I think we have pretty well laid to rest that particular debate. Now, discussions by educators and others center not on whether there should be Federal aid to education but rather on what shape it should take in the future.

Today I should like to talk to you about some of the signposts we have spotted while responding to the determination by Congress that education should be a basic tool for achieving our national goals.

I regard the development of that determination, and its use, as a major accomplishment of the past decade. In the last three years or so America has begun to deal with social problems as challenging as those that our country faced during the depression of the 1930's. We have resolved that the prevalence of poverty, the denial of civil rights, the existence of restrictions on the ability of individuals to develop their lives fully, are American problems that must be solved on an American scale.

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*Before the Governor's Conference on Education, in the Sherry-Plaza Hotel, Orlando, Florida, 12:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 1, 1967.

Thirty years ago, the Federal government sought to solve our economic problems through administrative devices. In that "age of the alphabet," we set up the WPA and the PWA to provide jobs for those out of work. We established the NYA to help needy students. The SEC was founded to protect investors.

We developed the Social Security system to maintain the aged, originated unemployment compensation insurance and the minimum wage to foster economic growth, and set up wide-ranging welfare assistance programs for the needy. These programs were focused on immediate and pressing needs of that day. Few of them directly involved any aspect of education. They dealt with symptoms rather than diseases.

But today's originators of public policy in the Administration and in Congress have recognized that, by providing assistance to education, the Federal government can help local and State agencies solve the basic economic and social problems that confront our people. We have come to recognize that the isolated individual without opportunity is usually the starting point of some of our most pressing national difficulties. And we have come to recognize, also, that correcting these difficulties requires giving such individuals special help of a kind which will help them to help themselves.

In short, we know now that we must try to give every person the opportunity to extend his own capacities to the fullest. We must try to do this in every way we can, and we must try at every possible level of human development.

This focus on education has generated a wide variety of Federal programs. The Manpower Training and Development program is jointly administered by the Labor Department and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The Head Start and Job Corps Programs flow from the Office of Economic Opportunity. The Labor Department, under the Economic Opportunity Act, administers the Neighborhood Youth Corps. The Department of Defense and National Science Foundation operate programs dealing with education.

But the greatest weight of this new emphasis on learning for the sake of success has fallen on our Nation's established school systems and their supporting agencies in the States and in the Federal government. We came to the schools with these new challenges when they had already accepted the burdens imposed by expanding technology, by new patterns of economic development, and by rapid population change.

In the years between 1940 and 1965, while the Nation's population was increasing by two-thirds:

--The proportion of students who finished high school had doubled.

--The number of persons receiving bachelor's degrees had almost tripled.

--The number receiving master's degrees had more than quadrupled.

--And the number receiving doctor's degrees had multiplied five times.

The schools and colleges of our Nation were spending some $3 billion annually on education at the start of this period. By 1965 we were spending $45 billion. State and local governments spent slightly over $2 billion on elementary and secondary education in 1940. By 1965 they were spending more than $20 billion.

Yet these more than tenfold increases in support failed to solve all the problems. Some schools were still inadequate. Many students dropped out of school. Somehow the children from the least fortunate families seemed to be least well served by the schools and colleges.

The result was the now-familiar reshaping of the Federal role in education to include direct active assistance to the schools and colleges. The new programs, which made this assistance possible and which are administered by the Office of Education, have two mutually supporting but distinct goals.

One goal is to help educational institutions, from nursery schools on up, to improve and expand their traditional services.

An outstanding example of a program which aids in this endeavor is the Higher Education Facilities Act. This year, the Act will provide more than $600 million in Federal loans and grants for construction of buildings at institutions of higher learning.

Together with the matching funds provided by the institutions it serves, this program results in about $2 billion worth of new academic facilities a year. It forms the largest single construction program in education. It provides new and expanded facilities -- not replacements. It gives institutions a chance to build the classrooms called for by the growing numbers of college age students.

A second goal of the new programs is to encourage the schools to embark upon the efforts needed to attack the problems of poverty and unemployment and illiteracy.

The most obvious example of this new type of Federal enterprise is Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Under this program, we are spending more than a billion dollars a year to help our elementary and secondary schools reach the impoverished youngsters whom we have failed in the past.

The tasks heaped upon our educational system have been gigantic. We have seen the Congress, in response to a demand by parents, educators, businessmen, and others concerned with this problem, charge the Office of Education with new responsibilities in elementary education, secondary education, vocational education, education of the handicapped, and virtually every other phase of education.

The educational structure has been afforded the assistance of a new ally -- the Federal government. There have been many expressions of concern that the Federal government would stifle the variety and autonomy that has been the justifiable pride and strength of our American educational system.

This concern may be appreciated, when one observes the American network of approximately 23,000 operating individual school districts and the spectrum of institutions of higher learning whose sponsorship and purposes are diverse to say the least.

But we have had at least one major advantage. No one in this Administration, and, so far as I know, no one in the Congress has ever had the faintest thought of building a monolithic school system in this country. The goal has been quite the reverse. The entire thrust of the Federal effort has been to strengthen the freedom of American education by investing in the perfection of its differences.

The proof of this hypothesis is easily found in the legislation itself. An express prohibition against Federal interference with curriculum, administration, or personnel in any school system or college is written into the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

And I think we have succeeded in following the spirit of this law in the relationships we have developed with State and local authorities.

The Federal administration has vigorously promoted programs designed to strengthen the State departments of education. Under Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, for example, we have sought to expand the resources available to these State departments.

The States have responded so vigorously to the Title V program that President Johnson has just asked the Congress to enlarge it. He has requested $15 million to start a new phase of assistance to State departments of education. It would provide grants for the planning and evaluation of educational programs on a long-range, Statewide basis.

States that wish to could use these grants to look ahead and provide for their needs in such critical areas as specialized personnel and curriculum development. The stimulus for this proposal is the knowledge that the best planning is done by those who have the responsibility for making the plans work. And I hope the States, who have that responsibility, will take the opportunities now offered to strengthen their operations. As they do so, we in the Federal government will be attempting to strengthen our capability for educational planning and evaluation and to coordinate our activities with those of the States.

For example, in the gathering of information about the nature of education we have already coordinated our endeavors with those of the States. We have agreed on common items for educational statistics and we have arrangements for exchange of computer tapes with over 30 States.

I think we have succeeded in working out other new relationships in programs involving concurrent local, State, and Federal efforts. The model in this area was developed in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The Congress declared a broad mandate -- children who come from impoverished homes should receive special assistance to overcome their educational handicaps. The Office of Education set up broad statements of policy to carry out this mandate.

But within limits set by Congress, the local school districts decide what their own needs are and the States determine which local projects are to receive financial support.

I do not mean to imply that there have been no complaints about our handling of the Title I program. I can assure you that friends have made me aware of State and local concerns with our report forms and evaluation requirements. There has even been a whisper or two about too much red tape.

I hope those involved in this program continue to let us know of their criticisms, because that is how we find out what needs improving. That is how we discover how we may best serve. But I must confess to a belief that we have come to a constructive and workable relationship, on three levels of government, a relationship that is unique in the history of American education.

This, then, has been the pattern. The Congress sets the goal. The Office of Education establishes a broad policy responsive to the Congressional intent. The State assumes the responsibility for executive administration. And the locality determines how to best meet its particular challenges.

The result, I feel, has been the strengthening of local autonomy and diversity while pursuing the national goals of educational equality and educational equity. And this, in turn, has done much to resolve the misgivings of those who forecast dire developments when the Federal government began to take a vital interest in American education.

I would like to note the special situation that grows from the Office of Education's unique responsibilities under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In the discharge of our duty to bring about the elimination of dual school systems, we have had close and sometimes difficult conversations with local school district representatives. And we have been met with allegations that this activity represents a form of "Federal control of education."

I honestly disagree. We have, in this instance, been charged by the Congress to implement a national policy pertaining to individual rights. Our special relationship with any school district ends the minute it assumes the responsibility of desegregating its schools.

And I must say that I wish all of the States concerned had responded with such goodwill as that shown by the State of Florida. We hope that the example set by your Department of Education and many of your universities and school districts will help us respond to the issues still before us.

But the point remains that we have the obligation to seek solutions to the problem of desegregation in the schools. We have no right -- and no desire -- to tamper with the local school's curriculum or to exercise control of any kind over educational affairs.

Of course, the happy discovery that three levels of bureaucracy can work together comfortably is cheering to the bureaucrats. But our purpose, after all, is so vast and so basic to our national welfare that it involves the interest and concern of virtually everyone.

In the Office of Education, for example, we have two dozen advisory committees to help us invest our $4 billion plus in Federal aid to education. We consult closely with the authorities in every field. And we draw considerable assistance from their scrutiny and their analysis of our policies.

Our agency is composed primarily of educators; and we continually try to sensitize ourselves to the needs of education by consultation with the educational community. We meet with teachers and administrators and with every other section of that community. And, just as we cannot operate in a vacuum, neither can education separate itself from other national endeavors. So we hear the views of government, business, labor, and others.

A good many discussions around the country, and in the Congress, are increasingly concerned with proposals that the Federal government advance into the area of general support for education; that Federal funds be made available for the operation of our schools and colleges without categories. Some of these proposals make sense and need to be examined as we develop new public policy.

Many school districts have reached the limit of their financial resources. Some States lack the broad industrial base to finance larger contributions to education. And the Nation has conclusively determined that it cannot afford to have its college students selected in or out on the basis of financial means. It can afford to make a man's brains not his bucks the currency which pays for an education.

So I think that at some point in the future we are going to find the Federal government doing for the States what many of the States now do for their school districts. Many thoughtful people are searching for some sort of Federal equalization program, to help those areas that do not have the resources to match the quality and standards of their more affluent neighbors. Any program we develop will have to have these important characteristics: (1)It must be built on continuing local and State support so that Federal dollars do not merely replace other dollars without benefit to children; (2) It must have an equalization feature which provides more help to those States which need more; (3) It must have a foundation of support which goes to every State; (4) It must assume the continuation of categorical aid so that important national problems continue to receive attention while broad basic support is introduced.

I think we have paved the way for increasing our assistance to the schools and colleges by demonstrating that we can help with special problems without introducing any element of control. The next step must be a form of general assistance to the States that is wisely distributed and that similarly avoids implications of control.

In short, I feel that a program of general support should not completely replace our national programs attacking specific problems. It is entirely appropriate for the Federal government to decide that it is a national problem when the child of an impoverished family tends to be left behind in our schools, or that the handicapped child needs more than a local school board can offer.

These children are the sons and daughters of our fellow citizens. And the mobility of the American people suggests that the place where they grow up may not -- in fact, probably will not -- be the place in which they live as adults. By insisting that efforts be channeled directly to these children, the Federal government is actually assisting all States, since all become the beneficiaries of our success.

We must not think, because we have made so splendid a beginning, that we can slacken our efforts in these specific areas or abandon them in order to concentrate on general support to education. The social ills we have undertaken to cure are still very much with us.

There are still children who live in want and who need special assistance to have an equal chance. There still are millions of youngsters who require additional and unusual services from their schools to learn the skills that will make them productive, self-sustaining Americans. There are still thousands of youngsters who could enrich our Nation immeasurably if they could find the means to stay in school after graduation from the 12th grade, and other thousands for whom grade 12 is the unattainable goal.

The American people have unmistakably declared their intention to wipe out inequality of educational opportunity. We must not jeopardize the gains we have made so far by jettisoning Federal support for solution of specific problems.

Fortunately, we need not do so. The rich diversity of our approach to education has demonstrated the ability to expand and assimilate the new duites thrust upon it. The States have entered into an increasingly fruitful partnership with the Federal government in education. It has begun to widen its outlook in response to the urgent need for innovation and change. And it has begun to find itself in its role as an agent of American progress.

And that, I believe, is where we go from here.

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